United Nations A/60/PV.83

General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

83rd plenary meeting
Tuesday, 30 May 2006, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Eliasson ..... (Sweden)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 45 (*continued*)

Follow-up to the outcome of the twenty-sixth special session: implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS

Draft decision (A/60/L.56)

The President: Members will recall that in annex E of the information notes dated 31 March 2006, 12 May 2006 and 25 May 2006 on the proposed arrangements for the high-level meeting and the comprehensive review, it was indicated that, pending a decision by the General Assembly, the rapporteurs of each panel will present summaries of the panel discussions during the plenary meeting to be held on Thursday, 1 June 2006.

Members will also recall that in annex F of the same information notes, it was indicated that, pending a decision by the General Assembly, the Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and the Executive Director of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria will be invited to address the opening of the high-level meeting, to be held on Friday, 2 June 2006, and that Ms. Khensani Mavasa, Deputy Chairperson of the Treatment Action Campaign, accredited through the International Women's Health Coalition, and Mr. William Harvey Roedy, President of MTV Networks International and Chairman of the Global Media AIDS initiative, will be invited to speak during the plenary meeting on Friday, 2 June, on behalf of civil society and the private sector, respectively.

The Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/60/L.56, entitled "Additional speakers for the high-level meeting and comprehensive review of the progress achieved in realizing the targets set out in the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision A/60/L.56?

Draft decision A/60/L.56 was adopted.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of agenda item 45.

Organization of work

The President: Before we conclude, I should like to inform members on that on Friday, 26 May 2006, a non-paper was faxed to the Chairmen of the regional groups informing them of a proposal for the high-level meeting to be held on 2 June 2006. Copies of the non-paper is available in this Conference Room.

As members know, we have more than 140 speakers on the list so far. In order to accommodate the list of speakers for the high-level meeting and to facilitate the participation of all speakers on the list, it was proposed that — following the opening statements by the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General, statements by the Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and the Executive Director of the Global Fund, and statements made by heads of State or Government — the high-level meeting, by decision of the Assembly, would be split and continued in two parallel segments. The two parallel segments would

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form an integral part of the high-level meeting and would take place simultaneously in two different conference rooms, with the remaining speakers inscribed on the list being assigned to one of the two segments on an alternating basis. Both segments would have equal status and would have full conference services and interpretation. Speakers in the two segments would be invited to speak from a podium, and all delegations would be invited to be present at both meetings.

Once the list has been finished, the high-level meeting would reconvene in the General Assembly Hall for the adoption of the political declaration and for the closing statement by the President of the General Assembly.

This organization of the meeting would have no precedent-setting effect, and it is proposed because of the very large number of speakers for one day. The proposed order would ensure that all member States were able to address the high-level meeting within a reasonable time frame, and that the culmination of the meeting with the adoption of the political declaration could take place before a full Assembly Hall.

As I said, this proposal has been circulated to the Chairs of the regional groups. Should there be no objection to the proposal, the General Assembly will take a decision on it on Thursday, 1 June, at the afternoon plenary meeting. Thus, we are awaiting reactions from the regional Chairs to this proposal for dealing with the intense interest in this subject and with the large participation, and in order to ensure a high-visibility culmination of the meeting in the General Assembly Hall at a time when what we do will be noticed.

I call on the representative of Cuba.

Mr. Cumberbach Miguén (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome your presence, Mr. President, as the General Assembly prepares for the high-level meeting on HIV/AIDS and on what we propose to do on that issue in coming years.

My delegation will examine the President's proposal and will respond through the Chairman of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. I just want to note that we are certain that this will not set a precedent, but that it is an exceptional measure because of the enormous interest that delegations have shown in participating in the meeting at the very highest level. We hope that all those who have placed their names on the list at the highest level will indeed be able participate in the meeting appropriately.

This should be a lesson to us for future meetings of this kind. My delegation was among those that proposed a very strong political commitment to the fight against HIV/AIDS. Nonetheless, during negotiations on the event we accepted the compromise that only one day of plenary meetings would be scheduled. But reality has shown that we should have planned at least two days of meetings. Now, we are practically forced to make an exception to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. I only hope that this will be a lesson the future. This is a very delicate issue affecting many people, and the political commitment deserved more time than we have allocated.

The President: I have great sympathy with the comments just made by the representative of Cuba. We are having exactly the same discussion in the President's Office: that there are lessons to be drawn. What is important in this proposal, of course, is that the statements made by heads of State or Government will be heard in full plenary meeting, in the morning, before we divide up for the afternoon. As I said, this is not to set a precedent; it should rather be seen as an example of what we have to do in crisis situations like this one. I think that what we gain, if we follow this proposal, is that we will get the attention that we want for the subject before us: the very serious subject of fighting HIV/AIDS.

I agree that we should draw lessons from this. We should be happy for high-level interest in a subject before the United Nations and should allocate sufficient time for high-level segments of this kind.

I look forward to delegations coming back with their proposals on this, and I hope for their understanding of the underlying reasons for the suggestion.

This will be a colourful week in the corridors of the United Nations, and I wish the Assembly success. I would express the hope that members will not forget the reform agenda: the next five or six weeks will be very intense. Let us hope that we can finish as much as possible before 54 of us have to turn our attention to Geneva for the meetings in July. Members should get ready for some hard work: no surprise for the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.